

## **Artist Statement of Shelly Denning**

Through my art, I hope to find ways in which to enrich the lives of others or addresses social issues. I consider myself to be a true humanist. I have strong beliefs regarding human rights, religion and politics and I'm not afraid to rattle a few cages to get my point across. Too many people have fought too long or continue to fight for their rights and I believe that everyone should be afforded the same freedoms. I may not always possess the words to express myself thoroughly, but I can make up for it with bold images that cannot be ignored.

I believe in experience over observation. As such, my art is often interactive, engaging the viewer in some way. This may be physically, through manipulation of the piece or by moving around it. It may also be emotionally, by forcing the viewer to reflect on what the message means to them. It can also be more subtle, leaving the viewer with a lingering impression that will continue to surface over time.

Overall, I wish to normalize the human experience and remove communication barriers. We all feel pain, experience insecurities and question our existence. So why aren't we talking about these things? We need to start a conversation if we hope to move forward. I hope that my art will open up a dialogue about issues such as gender identity, religion, race, ability and physical appearance.

In the past, I've done commissions to support myself, but I wish to take a giant leap away from this with my future work. I don't want to see my work hanging over someone's couch. It should be in public, where it can have the most impact. The last thing I want my work to be is marketable.